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Person of Character Award Recipient
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I first learned of the City's CHARACTER COUNTS! program as mother of children in the local schools. I loved the fact that it seemed like a great way to instill moral character development in an inclusive way (that is non-religious). When I joined Gaithersburg HELP and the Gaithersburg Rotary Club, I found ways to try and make connections. I discovered that Rotary had been actively supporting the program through reading and grading student essays. Our club members really had a good time sitting down and reading "hero" essays. We shared many chuckles and several tender moments reading these personal descriptions of adults that the students were praising. You could also tell that many of them were starting to make the connections between the six pillars (words) and actions that express them. It's one of my favorite Rotary activities during the year.

When two acquaintances asked for information because they wanted to nominate me [for a Person of Character award], I was surprised, and then honored. I wasn't sure I was better than many, many hard working community leaders.

Most of the Six Pillars in the program come directly from the "golden rule" that I learned through my parents and religious teachers, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." I've tried to ask the question, how I would feel if I were in _____'s position, whenever I've been asked to address issues in organizations I worked with. It really helps because that means you are automatically respecting, caring, forgiving, etc. I'm still working to maintain this standard and hope that it's getting better with each interaction.

Through Rotary I have a chance to interact with high school students in two area schools. I also have the opportunity to help with scholarship interviews. The school clubs are service clubs (sponsored by Rotary). Rotary has a four-way test that is: In everything we think, say and do, we ask: 1. Is it the Truth? 2. Is it Fair to all concerned? 3. Will it build good will and better friendships and 4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?" We share these ideals by mentoring/supporting the service clubs. We also make sure that students interested in the scholarship demonstrate ideals of service and leadership in the applications.

I think it's great to have local government promote these character traits. Hopefully, we can improve our citizens' track records and help encourage future citizens to act with moral courage and adherence to these standards as they mature and begin to participate in governance.